

Stocking Stuffers

**The gift of giving...
to drummers**

BOB SAYDLOWSKI

'TIS THE SEASON for giving, so I've decided to gear this column towards the non-drummer (read: gift-giver) who may be in need of ideas regarding that special drummer on the list. You drummers may want to cut this column out and place it visibly near the gift-giver's morning coffee, with highlighted sections, or something equally subtle.

Obviously, every drummer needs drumsticks and drumheads. The problem is, these

items are of a personal nature, in regards to brand, model, size, etc. (My previous columns will attest to that.) Let's stay with "universal" accessories for now.

A Brand New Bag

For the drummer who has tons of sticks already, but nowhere to put them, a stick bag of leather or Naugahyde is always nice. Many companies, like MsPerc and Pro-Mark produce extra-large stick bags, some with shoulder straps for easy cartage. Personally, I prefer zippers over velcro closures, as a zipped up bag allows better shielding from the outside environment. Be sure the stick bag has some sort way to hang it from the floor tom lug rods. Speaking of stick holders, Pro-Mark's Stick Depot is a pretty neat idea, allowing a pair of sticks to be placed in a stand-mounted holder, keeping them always on hand at the gig.

Cymbal bags are another much-needed item. I've seen so many drummers throwing their expensive cymbals into their trap cases, with no protection whatsoever — then they wonder why their cymbals are beginning to crack! A cymbal bag also lets the drummer pack his cymbals away each night after a gig, and take them safely home with him. (Not too much fun on a crowded subway or train, though.)

Noise Toys

Various percussion effect instruments can broaden any drummer's musical horizon. Items like Rhythmtech's tambourine, LP's Jam Block, or any small hand percussion are welcome additions which will add a different dimension to musical ideas on the drumkit.

A long-forgotten tool from the past is drum brushes. Rock players shudder to think

of brushes, but if you've never tried them, you're missing out. Brushes are no longer just wire. Manufacturers are making nylon-strand brushes, as well, and both types come with plastic, wooden, or rubber-coated metal handles. A step further from brushes are

a new pair of Reeboks, Nikes, or L.A. Gear are great, if they're lightweight and fashionable.

One thing a drummer can never have enough of, it seems, is drum keys. Keys are always getting lost or left behind. Certain variations on

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Calato's Blasticks and Pro-Mark's Multi-Rods.

Other accessory items include different bass drum beaters (wood, felt, acrylic, rubber, wool; Sonor as a 4-way beater that's pretty cool), various snare wires in steel, nylon or aircraft cable with varying widths, drum donut dampers (those circular O-rings that sit atop the batter head to cut out overring), and so many others. Even different colored rolls of tape can be packaged together as a color-coding system for stand tubes and their setup heights.

Quiet Riots

Every drummer likes to tell the world he's a musician, and almost every drum and cymbal company has t-shirts, sweatshirts, jackets, and so on. Drum shops might also have their own shirts, as do magazines. GIG has T-shirts, too!

Industrial noise filters are a caring gift for the rock or metal drummer who has to play next to high-volume amps. Hearing is one thing that cannot be store-bought. For hand protection, some players like to use drum gloves, similar to batting gloves, and for foot protection,

the theme include Randy May's Drum Tap for quick head changes, as well as spring-type keys which hurry along the head tuning/changing process. I have no experience with them, but drum torque wrenches claim to provide even, accurate head tensioning for those critical types.

Grow Your Own Self

If all these ideas don't really hit the spot, you can always turn to education. Pre-paid drum lessons, a complete set of catalogs from every manufacturer, and music magazine subscriptions (to GIG!) are all ways to help a drummer "grow" to a higher level of knowledge of his instrument.

These are just some of the basic accessories available for drummers today. Check through the magazine ads, and in your favorite drum shop for more ideas. Gift certificates from your local music stores are nice, too. Have a safe holiday and I'll see you next month.

(P.S. Nancy, if you're reading this, I could really use ...)

Bob Saydrowski is a drummer on the East Coast who still believes in Santa Claus.